

**Ecosystem  
Connectors** | Berlin  
Sarajevo  
Tirana

# Exploring Business Opportunities



**Albania**



**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Funded by:



Implemented by:



# Imprint

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ISBN:978-3-96604-016-7

Registration Court: Amtsgericht Charlottenburg (Berlin)

Registration Number: VR 32765 B

Photos by Julia Volk, Kierlo Albania, and Paula Schmidt on Pexels, Dario Daniel Silva on Unsplash, and by Visit Sarajevo.



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# Introduction

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The West Balkans, particularly Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, are emerging as dynamic players in the startup scene. Many positive indicators of development lead experts to believe that the startup ecosystems of these two Southeast Europe countries are following in the footsteps of other Western Balkans countries. With improving coordination between government actors, support organizations, and startups, the region's entrepreneurial landscape is poised for significant growth.

This creates a unique opportunity for business stakeholders in Berlin to collaborate with their counterparts in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, thus accelerating progress and generating mutual benefits for all parties.

The Ecosystem Connectors Brochure aims to outline key stakeholders in the respective ecosystems, highlight opportunities for cross-border cooperation, and pinpoint optimization potential for startup hubs. Through interviews with key stakeholders such as support organizations, local entrepreneurs, and regional investors, the publication also offers first-hand insights. It's not meant to merely be informative, but to be the starting point from which entrepreneurs and business stakeholders can take action.

## About Ecosystem Connectors

The [Ecosystem Connectors](#) project builds bridges across European entrepreneurship ecosystems with the aim of encouraging a stronger economic integration through facilitating partnerships, knowledge sharing and resource exchange between entrepreneurs and stakeholders. The project's first edition focuses on connecting Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Berlin.



[Learn more](#)

Through exchange trips, networking events, and workshops, the project will provide entrepreneurs and ecosystem multipliers/players across the Western Balkans with market access and business development support, and access to opportunities for international growth.

# Foreword

As the Senator for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises of Berlin, I am proud to support initiatives that strengthen the ties between Berlin's prolific startup ecosystem and the ecosystems emerging in Sarajevo and Tirana. Berlin's economy is fueled in large part by our startup activity – housing over 5,000 startups. This foundation enables us to extend meaningful partnerships which not only promote collaboration but also contribute to a unified, innovative and prosperous Europe.

Sarajevo's and Tirana's startup ecosystems are in an exciting stage of early development and we are thrilled to share expertise, foster innovation and build bridges across borders in order to support them on their way in the right direction, towards success and growth.

The Ecosystem Connectors | Berlin Sarajevo Tirana project is more than just economic cooperation – it is a statement of a deep partnership and shared ambition. The project aligns with Berlin's vision of creating an interconnected European startup network, which is based on sharing knowledge and resources in a way that transcends borders and strengthens Europe's economy as a whole.

Together, we can seize this opportunity to create lasting impact and forge a dynamic partnership for years to come.



**Senator Franziska  
Giffey**

Berlin Department for Economic  
Affairs, Energy and Public  
Enterprises



# Entrepreneurship and innovation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

# Stats & facts

## Key stats

Population

**3.2M**

Corporate tax rate

**10%**

Total startups (2024)

**875**

Startup jobs (2023/2024)

**818**

Total funding (2023)

**\$14.5M USD**

Total deals (2023)

**6**

German proficiency  
among students (2018)

**25% at B2 level  
or higher**

## Women in entrepreneurship

Top 20 startup founders

**33% female**

Women-led firms

**25%**

Gender among tertiary  
education students\* (2018)

**57% female**

"Companies will always seek talent  
wherever it exists, and Bosnia has **both the  
talent and the right conditions** to be an  
attractive destination for high-quality jobs  
and innovation."



**– Haris Basic,  
CEO, WiseScore**

\* Tertiary education is meant here to include all higher education, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral studies.

# Stats & facts

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## Top startup industries:

Since Bosnia and Herzegovina's startup ecosystem is in its early stages, the market is still sector-agnostic, and there is a lot of opportunity for ideation and innovation. However, these are a few industries worth highlighting.



### Software & data

Bosnia and Herzegovina boasts a robust talent pool with strong expertise in IT and tech. While the market has traditionally focused on outsourcing, the abundance of skilled professionals offers significant potential for growth and innovation.



### AI

The country is making strategic investments in AI education from an early age, positioning itself as a strong contender to generate innovative ideas in one of the startup world's most dynamic and influential industries.



### Fintech

With 20 fintech startups, including two already funded, Bosnia and Herzegovina is making strides in this vertical. It's a great opportunity for investment and further development, as total transaction value is projected to grow at an impressive annual rate of 23%.

# Company profiles

The following diverse set of startups was chosen based on a few factors, such as funding numbers, traction, online presence, and activity.

**E387** specializes in the production of electric vehicle chargers, focusing on sustainability and innovation, adhering to the highest industry standards.



Mobility

⚡ Seed

📅 2023

👤 1-10

📍 Sarajevo

😊 Founders

📈 Traction

- Armin Durmisevic
- Tarik Etemovic
- University SSST

E387 has developed their own smart charging app, and has introduced the region's first POS payment solution for EV charging together with Monri Payments.

**Emaq** is a product-based software company dedicated to delivering best-of-breed solutions tailored for industry leaders.



Software

⚡ Seed

📅 2022

👤 1-10

📍 Sarajevo

😊 Founders

📈 Traction

- Ensar Mešković

After hitting their first milestone of 5K end users, Emaq is set to roll out self-service customer onboarding and close to 25K end users.

# Ecosystem snapshot

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Just several decades after declaring its independence, Bosnia and Herzegovina's startup ecosystem is steadily evolving, sparking interest as a potential hub for tech innovation. The country boasts a highly skilled, multicultural population and a growing number of startup support initiatives, from university programs to professional incubators and accelerators. Cities like Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka, Tuzla, and Zenica are emerging as key entrepreneurial hubs, while international organizations and local institutions work together to foster innovation and growth.

A significant driver of this ecosystem is the rise of structured startup support programs. International Burch University (IBU) runs incubation initiatives for students, while Foundation Mozaik's Startup Studio Program provides startups with microgrants, business services, and mentorships. Investment is gaining traction, with the establishment of local and regional angel networks such as Vrbas Capital and Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe. Additionally, the IT sector is seeing an exciting shift, with service-based companies pivoting toward product.

Sarajevo, the capital and economic center, stands at the heart of this movement. Home to key incubators, universities, and corporate innovation initiatives, it is a focal point for both early-stage entrepreneurs and growing startups. Events like the Business Angel Summit are fostering investor connections, while the city's expanding coworking spaces and tech community reflect its potential as a regional innovation hub. With continued investment and strategic support, Bosnia and Herzegovina is poised for the next wave of entrepreneurial growth.



# Why invest in BiH?

**"If you are a smart investor, this is the place to be. You should come to Bosnia, because there is amazing talent, and you can easily scale startups with a low valuation that are already making money."**

**– Edin Mehic,**

Chief Strategy Officer, Bloomteq



## Regulatory environment for innovation

Bosnia and Herzegovina's tech scene is small but vibrant and adaptable. Fewer regulations in emerging industries like AI foster innovation compared to more regulated EU countries. Additionally, the low 10% corporate tax rate reduces financial barriers.

## Renewable energy growth

Bosnian electricity is some of the most affordable in Europe, at 8.7 cents/kWh (2023), and it's also making strides in renewables. However, gaps in energy storage, grid optimization, and AI create opportunities for German startups to provide solutions.

## Resilient business models

With little early-stage capital, Bosnian companies must hit the ground running. Where Bosnia lacks in quantity of startups, it makes up for it in resilient startups primed for scaling with the right investment.

## Retention of talent, and investment in youth:

Tapping into Bosnia and Herzegovina's existing pool of skilled tech professionals and retaining this talent is critical for growth. Programs like the University of Sarajevo's '[Data Science and Artificial Intelligence](#)' and efforts by organizations such as [Foundation787](#), [SarAI](#), and [Sarajevo School of Science and Technology](#) are driving efforts to equip the next generation with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in an increasingly tech-driven workforce.

# Company profiles

The following diverse set of startups was chosen based on a few factors, such as funding numbers, traction, online presence, and activity.

**Linkbound** is a social selling tool that allows content creators to filter their engaged audience and suggests the best way to DM (and close) them.



B2B SaaS

⚡ Pre-seed

📅 2025

👤 1-10

📍 Mostar

😊 Founders

📈 Traction

- Senad Šantić
- Jasmin Alić

Linkbound achieved 25K ARR in the first 24 hours after their January 2025 MVP launch. They currently have 100+ paid users who get leads in minutes.

**Valens** is a software development boutique working with startups, scaleups, and enterprise clients from countries such as Germany and the US, providing customer-centric, results-oriented IT solutions.



Software

⚡ Pre-seed

📅 2019

👤 11-50

📍 Sarajevo

😊 Founders

📈 Traction

- Branko Simić
- Mirza Mušić

In 2023, Valens set up a 450m<sup>2</sup> tech hub in the city of Mostar as foundations for further local expansion.

# Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Ecosystem support organizations



Bit Alliance

BIT Alliance



Blum Institute



Elevate



FABLAB

FabLab Sarajevo



Foundation 787



IMPAKT  
INVESTMENT FOUNDATION

Impakt Investment  
Foundation

## Universities



International  
Burch  
University

International Burch University



Sarajevo School of  
Science and Technology

Sarajevo School of Science  
and Technology



УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У  
ИСТОЧНОМ САРАЈЕВУ  
University of East Sarajevo

University of East Sarajevo



University of Sarajevo, Faculty  
of Electrical Engineering

See annex for extended stakeholder directory.

# Ecosystem stakeholder map

## Investment & investors



ICT Hub Ventures



*Great Association with  
Quality Deal Flow*

Keiretsu Forum  
Southeast Europe



South Central Ventures



BH Business Angel Network

## Government and development agencies



Implemented by  
**giz** Deutsche Institut für  
Zusammenarbeit GIZ Dein

GIZ Bosnia and  
Herzegovina



Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations  
of Bosnia and Herzegovina



Federal Ministry of Development,  
Entrepreneurship, and Crafts (FMRPO)



Ministry of Economy  
of Sarajevo Canton

**See annex for extended stakeholder directory.**

# Interview with Dajana Džindo

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**Dajana Džindo** is the **Executive Director of Foundation787**, where she champions the growth of female-led startups and youth entrepreneurship in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She also coordinates the **Western Balkans Women in Business Program** at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), leveraging her expertise in development finance and women's economic empowerment.

Dajana was kind enough to answer some questions for us about the current state of entrepreneurship in Sarajevo and predictions she has for the future.

**Nisha Katti for enpact:** Can you describe the entrepreneurial landscape in Sarajevo and how it has evolved in recent years? What does the startup and business ecosystem look like now?

**Dajana Džindo:** Sarajevo's entrepreneurial landscape has seen meaningful progress in recent years, even though it remains in the early stages of development. The city has witnessed an increase in coworking spaces and a broader mix of ecosystem actors, including NGOs, donor initiatives, and emerging private sector efforts. Although the number of startups remains relatively small, the environment is becoming more connected and better resourced than before.

Foundation 787 has had an active role in supporting the development

of the startup ecosystem in Sarajevo. Over the years, we've introduced some of the first pre-acceleration and acceleration programs for startups in the country, initiated the first business angel group, and continue to organize the Business Angel Summit, now in its fourth edition and the largest of its kind in the Western Balkans. For a period, it was the only event in the region focused exclusively on angel investing. In 2025, Foundation 787 was included by the Financial Times and Statista in the list of **Europe's Leading StartUp Hubs**, ranking 74th—an encouraging sign that the work being done locally is gaining broader recognition.

**enpact:** What kind of funding or investment opportunities are now available for Berlin entrepreneurs who want to collaborate with or invest in local businesses?

**DD:** The investment landscape in Sarajevo is still developing, but several entry points exist—especially for early-stage collaboration and engagement. At the foundational level, there is a strong presence of donor-funded programs that offer grants and technical support to startups and small businesses, often implemented through local organizations. These initiatives can be a useful starting point for understanding the local market and connecting with promising entrepreneurs.

There are also corporate and institutional investors active in the country, but their support is usually directed toward more mature businesses. This leaves a clear funding gap for early- and growth-stage startups—particularly those with innovative or scalable models.

To address this, Foundation 787 co-founded the country's first business angel group and launched the Business Angel Summit, which is helping to activate early-stage private capital and build a community of angel investors. While still modest in size, this is a growing space that welcomes international co-investors and collaboration.

At the ecosystem level, an important factor to highlight is the absence of locally based venture capital

funds. For Berlin entrepreneurs and investors, this represents a significant opportunity to step into a relatively untapped market—whether through direct investment, syndication, or even helping shape future VC infrastructure.

Lastly, the strong Bosnian diaspora in Germany offers a natural bridge. These long-standing cultural and economic ties can support trust-based partnerships, help navigate the local context, and even open channels for market access in both directions.

In short, while the investment environment is still emerging, there



is room—and readiness—for strategic collaboration from Berlin-based entrepreneurs and investors looking to contribute more than just capital.

**enpact: What unique advantages does Sarajevo offer to Berlin-based entrepreneurs looking to expand or collaborate in your region?**

**DD:** Sarajevo offers several distinct advantages for Berlin-based entrepreneurs interested in collaboration, particularly in emerging markets with room to grow.

First, operational costs are significantly lower than in Western Europe, making Sarajevo an attractive base for piloting products, building nearshore teams, or testing new markets. The city also has a solid talent pool—especially in IT, engineering, and design—with many professionals fluent in English and experienced in working across borders. This combination of affordability and talent makes it easier to build lean, skilled teams.

Second, Sarajevo's geographical position adds to its strategic value. It offers not only access to the Western Balkans—where shared languages and cultural familiarity support regional expansion—but also strong historical and economic ties to both Southern Europe and parts of the MENA region. This makes it a potential gateway for entrepreneurs looking beyond just local impact.

Additionally, the presence of a large and engaged BiH diaspora

in Germany provides a natural advantage. These cross-border ties facilitate trust, collaboration, and market entry in both directions—helping Berlin entrepreneurs more easily navigate the local environment.

Finally, Sarajevo's still-developing ecosystem means Berlin-based entrepreneurs can bring real added value—through partnerships, mentoring, or strategic investment—while helping shape a space that's still open to fresh ideas and international collaboration.

**enpact: What is the talent pool like in Sarajevo, and how can Berlin entrepreneurs benefit from local expertise?**

**DD:** Sarajevo offers a well-educated and increasingly experienced talent pool, particularly in areas such as software development, engineering, design, business, and digital marketing. Many professionals—especially younger generations—are fluent in English, as well as German, French, and other international languages, which adds to the ease of cross-border collaboration.

What makes the local talent pool especially valuable is its adaptability and strong work ethic, often paired with a creative and solution-oriented mindset. The cost-to-skill ratio is also favorable compared to Western Europe, allowing Berlin-based entrepreneurs to build or extend lean teams without compromising on quality.

In addition, Bosnia and Herzegovina has several universities producing solid technical and business graduates, and while more structured support systems like accelerators or corporate R&D partnerships are still developing, there's a growing openness among professionals to work in startup and innovation environments.

For Berlin entrepreneurs, this means they can tap into local talent not just for operational support, but also as co-creators—individuals and teams who understand the regional context and can contribute meaningfully to product development, service localization, and scaling efforts in Southeast Europe and beyond.

**enpact: How do you envision fostering greater collaboration between entrepreneurs from Berlin and those in Sarajevo?**

**DD:** Fostering stronger ties between Berlin and Sarajevo's entrepreneurial communities starts with creating opportunities for meaningful interaction—through joint programs, exchange visits, mentorship, and early-stage partnerships. There is clear potential to connect Berlin's more mature startup scene with Sarajevo's emerging one in a way that benefits both sides.

There's also value in engaging the BiH diaspora in Germany—not only as a cultural and economic bridge but as potential mentors, investors, or collaborators who understand both markets well. Encouraging

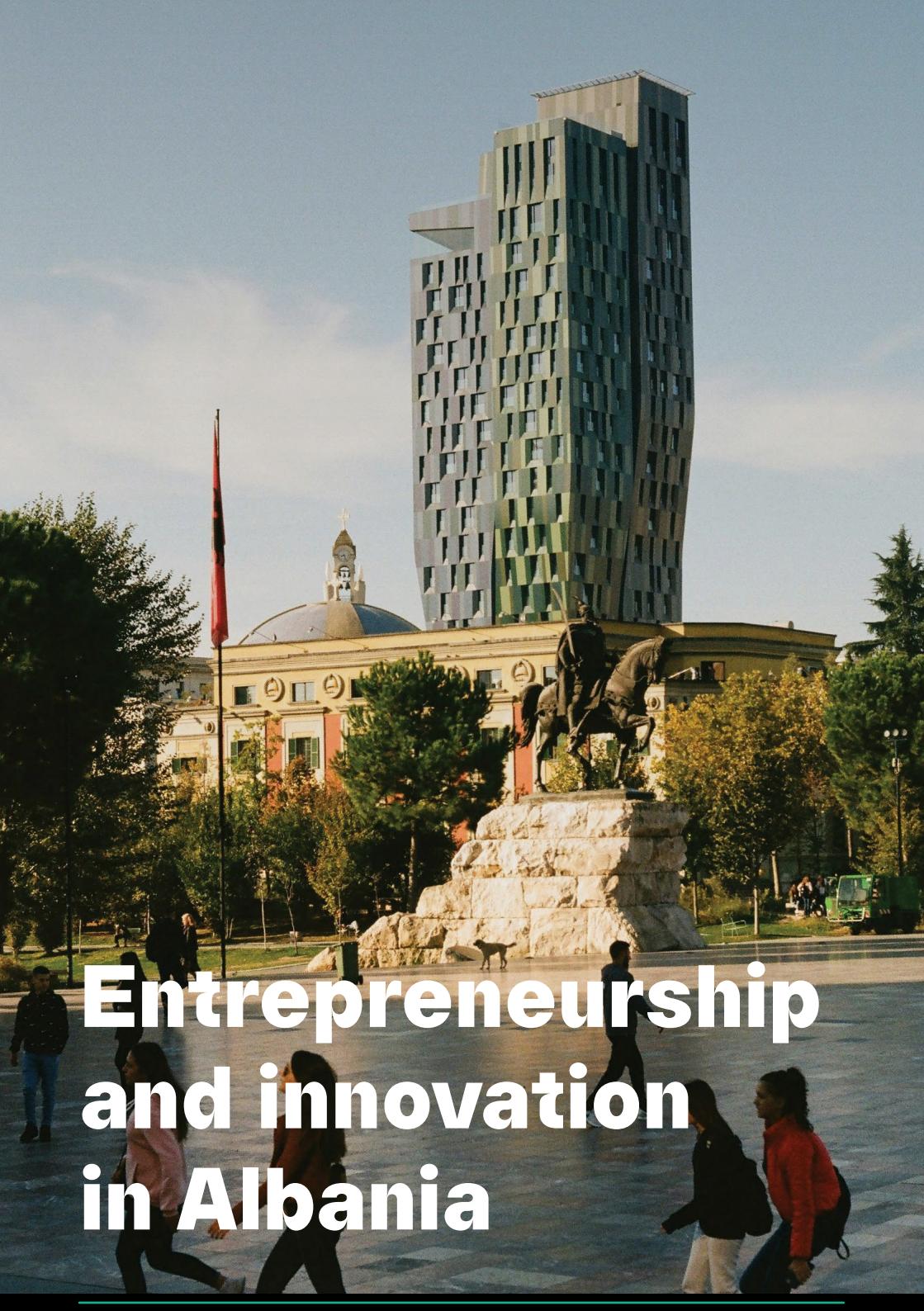
involvement from Berlin-based support organizations, VCs, and corporates can further accelerate this collaboration by opening new pathways for Sarajevo startups to grow beyond the local market.

Ultimately, we see this as a two-way street: Sarajevo offers grounded, driven entrepreneurs and untapped potential, while Berlin brings experience, networks, and access to capital. Structured collaboration can unlock value for both.

**enpact: What message would you send to Berlin entrepreneurs and support organizations about the potential of your city for future growth and investment?**

**DD:** Sarajevo may not be a major startup hub yet, but it's a city full of potential—especially for those looking to create meaningful, long-term partnerships. What we lack in size, we make up for in agility, talent, and openness to collaboration. The ecosystem is still forming, which means there's space to contribute, shape, and grow together.

For Berlin entrepreneurs and support organizations, this is an opportunity to engage early in a market that's underexplored but increasingly connected—with strong ties to the Western Balkans, Southern Europe, and even MENA. Whether through investment, joint ventures, talent partnerships, or knowledge exchange, Sarajevo offers a chance to co-build—not just to scale into the region, but to help develop it.



# Entrepreneurship and innovation in Albania

# Stats & facts

## Key stats

Population

**2.8M**

Corporate tax rate

**15%**

Digital nomad taxes

**No tax obligations  
for the first year**

Total startups (2024)

**750**

Startup jobs (2023/2024)

**606**

Total funding (2022)

**\$1.06M USD**

Total deals (2022)

**4**

## Women in entrepreneurship

Top 20 startup founders

**67% female**

Top 20 startup capital raises

**97% female**

University graduates (2020)

**66% female**

“[Albania] is catching up fast and **we are very, very hungry for success**. Populations who drive the economy forward are not waiting around for anyone to babysit them—these are people who are very entrepreneurial, resourceful, and resilient.”

— **Ravik Mima**,

CEO Keiretsu Forum, Southeast Europe

# Stats & facts

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## Top startup industries:

Since Albania's startup ecosystem is in its early stages, the market is still sector-agnostic, and there is a lot of opportunity for ideation and innovation. However, these are a few industries worth highlighting.



### Software & data

Software startups are thriving in Albania, encompassing software development, SaaS, machine learning, virtual reality, and web apps. Events like the popular ICT Awards help spotlight and amplify Albanian startups in this sector.



### AI

With a median age of 37, Albania's young workforce shows growing interest in STEM fields. Supported by universities, tech incubators, and accelerators, the country is well-positioned for AI success. Its renewable energy capacity also provides an environmentally-friendly advantage for energy-intensive AI ventures.



### E-commerce & retail

Increasing internet penetration, widespread smartphone adoption, and a youthful, tech-savvy population make e-commerce a lucrative opportunity for startups and investors. Albania's digital transformation and improved digital payment infrastructure have significantly lowered barriers to entry for e-commerce businesses.

# Company profiles

The following diverse set of startups was chosen based on a few factors, such as funding numbers, traction, online presence, and activity.

**ConsciESG** brings a platform that helps public equity fund managers improve their portfolio impact and returns through ESG integration in portfolio construction.



Fintech

⚡ Pre-seed

📅 2022

👤 1-10

📍 Tirana

☺️ Founders

- Briseida Gjoza
- Adeliada Mehmetaj

☒ Traction

After receiving investment from Fil Rouge Capital and Techstars, ConsciESG launched in September 2024 and is currently running 3 pilot projects in Paris, Milano and NYC.

**LekoTech's** SaaS platform revolutionizes the automotive spare parts industry by offering fleet maintenance, spare part digitalization and ecommerce services to customers.



Automotive

⚡ Seed

📅 2017

👤 11-50

📍 Tirana

☺️ Founders

- Francesco Carbone
- Ledjon Agalliu
- Elton Njela
- Nikolin Njela

☒ Traction

Over 30,000 spare part items have been added to LekoTech's catalog, facilitating efficient inventory management for businesses.

# Ecosystem snapshot

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Though still in its infancy, Albania's startup ecosystem is at a critical juncture. As public and private stakeholders push to promote startup development and entrepreneurship in the country, an eager, skilled workforce and the cost-effectiveness of doing business are all factors rendering Albania a force to be reckoned with.

What we are currently seeing in Albania is a massive enthusiasm by ecosystem supporters, entrepreneurs, and government actors to get in sync with one another. There are exciting initiatives such as Tirana Inc., sponsored by a group of universities, and the centralization of startup information on AlbaniaTech, while Startup Albania is spearheading the effort to provide comprehensive support and act as a one-stop-shop for startup services.

Tirana, as the capital and economic hub, plays a vital role in shaping Albania's startup ecosystem. The city is home to a growing number of incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces fostering innovation. With strong university-driven initiatives and increasing digital adoption, Tirana is positioning itself as a regional tech hub. The city's young, entrepreneurial population and vibrant business culture make it an attractive destination for startups looking to scale.

Investment potential in Albania is rising, with sectors like fintech, agritech, and SaaS drawing increasing interest. While venture funding remains limited, recent government initiatives and the emergence of angel investor networks signal positive momentum. As Albania integrates further with European markets, early investors stand to benefit from first-mover advantages in a rapidly developing ecosystem.



# Interview with Erblina Shehu

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Erblina Shehu is an Albanian entrepreneur dedicated to providing tools that empower individuals to make informed, healthier choices, and to bringing life-changing solutions to new markets. In 2022, **she founded both Kungul and Soma Light Therapy** to innovate health and wellness.

We had the opportunity to interview Erblina about her experience as an entrepreneur and female founder in Albania.

**Nisha Katti for enpact: What makes now the time to invest in Albania? What key developments have made it conducive to business growth? I'd also be interested in your takes on how the entrepreneurship ecosystem has evolved since you've been active within it.**

**Erblina Shehu:** Albania is currently undergoing significant economic and digital transformation, making it an exciting time for investment. The government has been focusing on improving infrastructure, digitizing public services, and creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem conducive to business growth. Additionally, Albania's young and skilled workforce, coupled with its strategic location in the Balkans, offers immense potential for tech startups like Kungul.

Over the past few years, I've seen

the entrepreneurship ecosystem mature, with a rising number of accelerators, incubators, and co-working spaces. Startups now have better access to support networks, and we're beginning to see successful exits that inspire a new wave of entrepreneurs. The growth of initiatives like WeGrow, the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE), founded by the US Embassy, and the efforts of our startup agency in creating a hub for meet-ups by bringing in world-class experts have also been instrumental in advancing the entrepreneurial landscape.

**enpact: What message would you send to Berlin entrepreneurs and support organizations about the potential of your city for future growth and investment?**

**ESH:** Tirana, the capital of Albania, is an emerging hub for innovation with a growing community of ambitious

startups. For Berlin entrepreneurs and support organizations, I'd say—don't overlook the Western Balkans. The cost of doing business is significantly lower, and the talent pool is strong, especially in tech and engineering fields.

Moreover, the Albanian government has been proactive in incentivizing foreign investment and fostering a startup-friendly environment. There are unique market opportunities here, especially for tech and wellness industries, that remain untapped and could be the next big growth area.

**enpact:** What key resources (e.g., funding, mentorship, talent, education) are most accessible in your home city?

**ESH:** In Tirana, there is a vibrant network of startup support organizations providing mentorship, training programs, and co-working spaces. Organizations like WeGrow, AWE, and Yunus Social Business have created a strong ecosystem for early-stage startups.

Additionally, Albania has a pool of young, talented professionals eager to work in tech, marketing, and business development. While funding is still a challenge compared to larger ecosystems like Berlin, we've seen progress in accessing

EU grants, regional investors, and local angel networks. Uplift, the most prestigious incubator in Albania, also provides significant support and exposure for startups like Kungul.

**enpact:** How do you feel as a female entrepreneur in Albania?

**ESH:** Being a female entrepreneur in Albania is both a challenge and an opportunity. While the entrepreneurial landscape is male-dominated, I've seen a growing community of women-led startups emerging and receiving support from local organizations and international initiatives. Programs specifically designed for women entrepreneurs, like WeGrow and AWE, have been crucial in building this momentum.

Personally, I've found that despite the challenges, the community is



supportive, and there is an eagerness to see women succeed. It's an exciting time to be a part of this movement and to set an example for other women looking to pursue their business ideas.

**enpact:** You mentioned you were able to find an incubator and win first prize soon after joining. Do you generally feel supported by the startup ecosystem in Albania? How about the governmental and regulatory landscape?

**ESH:** Yes, I've felt supported by the startup ecosystem in Albania, and my experiences with WeGrow, AWE, and Uplift have been instrumental in the growth of Kungul. Winning first prize at WeGrow and participating in Uplift

were pivotal moments that validated our efforts and provided us with crucial resources to scale.

Furthermore, the startup agency's initiative to bring world-class experts for meet-ups has enriched the ecosystem, offering invaluable knowledge and connections. However, while there is support from the startup ecosystem, the governmental and regulatory landscape still poses challenges, particularly around access to funding and bureaucratic hurdles. The government is making efforts to modernize these processes, but there's still work to be done to create a more seamless environment for startups.



# Why invest in Albania?

"If there is an AI startup or an AI-interested investor from Berlin who for whatever reason, be it marketing or sustainability, wants to move to 100% renewable energy—you can only have that in Albania today."

— **Ravik Mima,**

CEO Keiretsu Forum, Southeast Europe



## Increasing coordination

Collaboration among incubators, accelerators, and coworking spaces is growing, strengthening startup support. AlbaniaTech serves as a key platform, while Tirana Inc., Uplift, and Growpreneur assist startups at various stages. Co-working spaces like Coolab also partner with support organizations for events and training.

## Renewable energy growth

Renewable energy capacity has increased significantly, led by stakeholders such as the EBRD and its Renewable Energy Auction program in Albania. Gaps remain in energy storage, grid optimization, and AI-driven management, creating opportunities for German startups to offer advanced solutions.

## Growing government support

Government support for startups is growing, with initiatives like the 2022 Law on the Support and Development of Start-ups. EU accession negotiations began the same year, with Albania aiming for readiness by 2030.

## Return migration

Albania currently has a skilled IT workforce, but a stronger startup ecosystem could attract its highly educated, multilingual diaspora back, bringing valuable networks and opportunities.

## Agritech & tourism tech

The 2016 "Smart Specialization (S3)" mapping identified agriculture and hospitality as the least digitized sectors, presenting opportunities for agritech and tourism tech startups.

\* The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe reports that 45% of Albania's energy supply comes from renewables. Uniquely, 96% of this is hydropower and solar—green, non-polluting sources—rather than cleaner but still polluting alternatives like nuclear power.

# Company profiles

The following diverse set of startups was chosen based on a few factors, such as funding numbers, traction, online presence, and activity.

**Publer** is a virtual social media superhero that allows users to collaborate, schedule, and analyze social media activity.



SaaS

⚡ Bootstrapped

📅 2016

👤 11-50

📍 Tirana

😊 Founders

📈 Traction

- Ervin Kalemi

Publer has garnered a significant user base, managing social media accounts for thousands of businesses worldwide.

**Rubicon** simplifies users' finances by providing access to digital payments, ecommerce, investments, and innovative financial services, and has developed a payment processing network.



Fintech

⚡ Acquired

📅 2020

👤 1-10

📍 Tirana

😊 Founders

📈 Traction

- Dr. Armand Brahaj

In March 2024, Rubicon was acquired by dev.al, a leading software development company in Albania, marking a significant milestone in the Albanian fintech sector.

# Interview with Gerti Boshnjaku

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Gerti Boshnjaku is a community builder and entrepreneur dedicated to Albania's tech ecosystem. With 23+ years in marketing and media, he founded New Media Group and launched [Business Magazine Albania](#) in 2015 to spotlight startups. As Startup Grind Tirana Director since 2016, he has fostered founder networks, while his AllWeb Digital Marketing Conference connects industry leaders.

In 2021, **he founded [AlbaniaTech](#)** to unify and promote Albania's innovation landscape globally. Through mentorship and strategic initiatives, Gerti continues to drive the country's startup growth, bridging local entrepreneurs with international investors and opportunities.

Gerti shared his insights with us from the perspective of an ecosystem supporter. Here is the resulting interview, slightly edited for length and clarity.

**Nisha Katti for enpact:** Tell me about [AlbaniaTech](#)'s support of the Albanian startup ecosystem.

**Gerti Boshnjaku:** Our main goal is to understand what's going on in the startup environment, create content, and promote. Our hope is that maybe in the future, we can provide some soft landing services. If you need legal advice, we can also provide basic legal and regulatory resources.

**enpact:** How easy is it for foreign entrepreneurs to navigate the legal and regulatory environment in your country? What support do you provide in this area?

**GB:** For an Albanian startup, it's really easy to start up a company.

It takes one day, one Euro. There are incentives now—if you found a startup, there are some taxes you do not have to pay.

For a foreign company to open up a business [in Albania], it is not difficult. The legislation is quite supportive. It does take some time to get a residency permit to be established here for people who want to come [to Albania] to invest, but the rest is really quite easy and supported. The tax system is simpler compared to Western countries.

**enpact:** Why is right now the time to invest in or expand to Albania? What key developments have made it conducive to business growth,

**and how has the entrepreneurship ecosystem evolved since you've been active within it?**

**GB:** In these years, there has been an increase in interest. For example, four or five years ago, every startup was working on their own. There were very few accelerators and very little funding. In these last few years, there has been a lot of attention from the government, which has resulted in new laws for startups.

They have also established a fund which is very important—it's a 10M EUR fund for four years, starting with 1M EUR in grant form in the first phase, 3M EUR in the second phase, and 3M EUR in the third. It'll be ongoing until the fund of 10M EUR is disbursed for startups and innovation service organizations (ISOs). This is important because until now, there were many small grants like three to four thousand Euros or Dollars, but now it's becoming more serious as the government is backing these initiatives.

Also, development agencies like GIZ are coordinating with the [Albanian] government, and this has attracted the interest of big corporations in sectors such as telecommunications and banking. [These corporations] were doing sporadic initiatives, but now they see the interest, and they are trying to get together whenever there are calls.

Universities have also taken a bigger role because now they are applying for projects, and getting funding

to run their own accelerators and to do local awareness activities. At first, no university was doing entrepreneurship acceleration. Now, they know how to apply, where to apply, and are doing their own acceleration.

This cooperation between academia, business, government, and donors is trying to get results. Also, education wise, four to five years ago, there were only a few who understood how the startup journey works. Now, there are more.

Over the last two years, we've also developed the missing part—a proper funding structure that includes private capital. There have been two funds that have been engaged: One is Keiretsu Forum, and the other is a new initiative called the Albanian Business Angels Network—which we created in 2024, and it's really a serious initiative with a Board of Advisors and investors from Europe. They did their first event in Belgium, where they invited some Albanian company, and some investors from Brussels, and they got to know and understand each other.

Due to AlbaniaTech's work, a lot of investors have gotten interested in the startup scene in Albania and have asked us to source some startups, and do the matches. So, we've done this type of deal matching and been successful.

Also, there is interest from the Albanian diaspora. Let's say someone goes to the U.S., gets successful,

builds a billion dollar company. Now he's back, and has created a private fund in order to support Albanian startups, and he's engaged with AlbaniaTech to work with the ecosystem, to do the sourcing, to do the interviews, and to get him to know the scene. Until now, there has only been talk, but now the funding is more concrete.

**enpact:** Do you have any examples you can share of successful partnerships or investments in Albania?

**GB:** There are some success stories. One is between Kevin Sekniqi, the genius owner of Avalanche, a blockchain company. He's from Albania, 31 years old, and built his company in the U.S. He's now engaged with us and has invested in Patoko, a startup out of Albania.

We've also done matching between Frut'za, the startup, and AI Net. They have been invested in by Fil Rouge Capital, which is a fund that operates in Slovenia, Croatia, and in the region.

There has also been a major evolution of the Albania government with the e-Albania services. Mainly every government service is now going through e-Albania.

**enpact:** Looking ahead, how do you see Albania evolving, and what role do you see for international entrepreneurs in that growth?

**GB:** I think that we are at the right moment to see the leap. We are at the beginning, but in the growth phase. Until now, it was just chaotic growth, but now I think that every piece of the puzzle is set up, and we are going to see the fruits of our labor in the next three to five years. We are going to see major growth in terms of startups and new businesses developed by Albanian people.

Ten years ago, there were young guys trying to build these new ideas, but in the last decade, these people have become more mature and we are seeing more experienced



leaders who know what to do. The most successful startups are led by mature people who know what they're doing, where to get support, and know how to build.

**enpact:** What message would you like to send to Berlin entrepreneurs who may be considering expanding their business to Tirana or investing in the region?

**GB:** Albania has a lot that you can discover, because most foreigners don't know anything about Albania. There is young talent here, and a lot to offer in terms of capacity and energy. It's a country where you can find people who are eager to do great things. It's a country eager to build things that go global, and have their names on the global scene. This is not easy to find just anywhere, and it's unexplored here.

People are currently spending too much energy on small-scale initiatives, but if they have a helping hand, or a different perspective from someone who can help them to see the larger scale, I think all of the energy that they have spent to build a company that will serve a hundred thousand clients could be scaled to serve a hundred million people.

I think the capacity and talent and desire is here, but the connection to the big picture is still missing. So, for any investor or anyone who is really interested in building, and who is looking for people with grit, with the right capacity and talent, we have this in Albania.



# Albania ecosystem

## Ecosystem support organizations



Albanian Night



Coolab



Protik



Tirana Inc.



Uplift



Women Founders Network Albania

## Universities



Epoka University



Metropolitan University of Tirana



Polis University



University of Tirana

See annex for extended stakeholder directory.

# Stakeholder map

## Investment & investors



Albanian Business  
Angels Network



ICT Hub Ventures



*Great Association with  
Quality Deal Flow*

Keiretsu Forum  
Southeast Europe



South Central  
Ventures

South Central  
Ventures

## Government and development agencies



Albanian Investment  
Corporation (AIC)



Albanian Investment  
Development Agency (AIDA)



GIZ Albania



Startup Albania  
Agency

See annex for extended stakeholder directory.

# Interview with Adeliada Mehmetaj

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Adeliada Mehmetaj, Ph.D., is a passionate advocate for sustainability and innovation in Albania's startup ecosystem. After earning her Ph.D. in Economics from Drexel University, she spent years as a lecturer and researcher at Seattle University before **co-founding ConsciESG** in 2022.

With a background in mathematics, economics, and quantitative modeling, she brings data-driven insights to sustainability and economic growth. Adeliada is dedicated to shaping a greener future by helping businesses integrate ESG principles, making a lasting impact on Albania's entrepreneurial landscape.

The following is our interview with Adeliada, in which she shares her insights about the Albanian startup ecosystem from the perspective of an entrepreneur.

**Nisha Katti for enpact:** What makes now the right time to invest in Albania?

**Adeliada Mehmetaj:** Albania's startup ecosystem is young but ventures like ConsciESG, which target and aspire to conquer global markets, are on the rise. Recently the country has also attracted a great amount of tech talent, AKA the digital nomads, which combined with the local tech talent, provide a considerable tech workforce for startups or companies that want to open in Albania.

Additionally, with EU accession talks reopened and Albania aiming to join by 2030, trade and other economic barriers with the EU will soon diminish. Post-accession, key

economic factors like capital and labor costs are expected to align with EU standards, so securing more favorable conditions now while demand and competition is still low, can lead to significant cost savings in the future.

**enpact:** How has the entrepreneurship ecosystem evolved since you've been active within it? What key developments have made it conducive to business growth?

**AM:** Since I've been involved, Albania's entrepreneurship ecosystem has seen a few important transformations. The Startup Agency is a recently active institution aiming to support Albanian founders in their early stages, offering both financial

and resource support. However, there's still work to be done for later-stage startups, particularly around more favorable regulations and ecosystems that attract VC funding.

On the private side, initiatives like the Keiretsu SEE angel investors forum and ecosystem players like Plug & Play and Uplift Western Balkans which are also located and active in Tirana, are worth mentioning for their determination to break existing investment barriers for early-stage founders. I would also like to personally mention the rise of shared office spaces, including Techspace in particular, which has helped us save rent costs in the early-stages of our startup journey.

Last but not least, although they have been around since before ConsciESG was born, programs like EU4Innovation and Swiss EP, are also key supporters with a significant positive impact in the Albanian startup ecosystem.

**enpact:** Which sectors and industries in Albania are good opportunities for international investment?

**AM:** Green energy, especially investing in solar energy. Tourism of course and last but not least tech. The local tech talent we have encountered has proven invaluable.



**enpact:** Do you have anything to say to female entrepreneurs looking to expand to Albania? Have you felt like you've had institutional support as a female entrepreneur in Albania?

**AM:** Albania is thriving in female entrepreneurs. Actually there are great examples of successful Albanian women in business both locally and globally. Albania also has a great ratio of women in governance and women in the workforce.

**enpact:** What message would you send to Berlin entrepreneurs and support organizations about the potential of your city for future growth and investment?

Tirana is an up and coming city. Albania is still an emerging economy, meaning that its growth numbers are still higher than the rest of Europe. The international policy seems to be converging closer to the EU. There is a clearly defined pledge for both a regulatory and economic convergence to the EU, which are all good indicators for a more sustainable future economic growth and stability, which on the other hand are good indicators for entrepreneurs looking to expand their operations in Albania.

# Ecosystem Connectors

Berlin  
Sarajevo  
Tirana

## Sarajevo and Tirana exchange trip

Excited to get hands-on and learn more about the startup scenes of Sarajevo and Tirana? We have just the thing for you.

If you are an entrepreneur, investor, ecosystem enabler or lead a support organization (i.e. incubator or accelerator program) and are based in Berlin, you have the opportunity to take part in an all-expenses paid delegation trip to Sarajevo and Tirana in September 2025.

The delegation schedule will include ecosystem tours, visits to key startup support organizations and government representatives, networking opportunities and the chance for 1-on-1 meetings with leading startups and key stakeholders to explore potential partnerships.

Please visit the website for more information on how to apply and fill out the form to be notified when applications open for the exchange trips.



[Learn more](#)



# Berlin as a startup hub

## Key stats

Population

**3.4M**

Berlin ecosystem ranking  
**13th worldwide**

Germany ecosystem ranking  
**7th worldwide**

Total startups (2024)  
**4800+**

VC funding in Germany (2024)  
**~31% went to Berlin startups\***

VCs in Berlin  
**160+**

Bosnian-origin diaspora  
**248,000 in Germany**

Albanian-speaking diaspora  
**320,000 in Germany**



Startup to watch

**TreeScatter**

**Berlin Newcomer Startup Award 2024 Finalist**

TreeScatter uses AI and remote sensing to create fast and affordable forest inventories.

\* January 2025's *'EY Startup Barometer Germany'* reports that there was "just over 7 billion euros" of venture capital investments in Germany in 2024, with Berlin receiving EUR 2.18M of that.

# Top industries

## Fintech



Of Germany's seven fintech unicorns, 4 come from Berlin. In fact, in 2024, Berlin-based fintech startups received 89% of Germany's total fintech VC funding—at EUR 463M.

## Software & data



Berlin-based software and analytics startups received EUR 601M in funding in 2024, making this sector Berlin's most highly funded.

## Healthtech



Health startups in Berlin raised a total of EUR 149M in 2024, putting this sector in 3rd place overall.

# Berlin unicorns

Berlin has around 21 unicorns, of which we have selected a few to showcase Berlin's incredible startup diversity.

### **Fintech | Valuation: \$5.36B USD (2021)**

#### Trade Republic

Empowers millions of Europeans for wealth creation through easy, secure, and free access to financial markets

### **Fintech | Valuation: \$3B USD (2024)**

#### N26

An online bank that offers mobile banking to customers within the European Union

### **Insurance | Valuation: \$4.5B USD (2023)**

#### wefox

The world's first digital insurance company—combining technology and human expertise to give customers a better way to manage, track, and pay for their insurance

### **Tourism | Valuation: \$2B USD (2023)**

#### GetYourGuide

Marketplace for finding and booking tourist, travel and other experiences

# Berlin – Cross-Border Collaboration

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Berlin is home to over 4,500 startups, making it the hottest startup city in Germany and 13th in the world. Boasting 20+ unicorn businesses including N26 and Personio, Berlin lures top talent from around the world with favorable employment conditions, its enduring status as Western Europe's most affordable capital city\*, and a reputation for culture and creativity.

As of 2022, international employees made up 41% of Berlin's startup workforce, enriching the ecosystem with global diversity and expansive networks beyond Germany's borders. Furthermore, until 2023, Germany led Europe in venture capital funding for tech startups, cementing Berlin's position as a powerhouse of entrepreneurial innovation.

The depth of expertise and experience in Berlin's ecosystem offers immense value to emerging startup communities in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Kosta Andrić, Chair of the Western Balkans

Startup Alliance and Executive Director of ICT Hub, highlights the significance of Berlin's role: "The Berlin ecosystem is much more developed, so a lot of people who have successfully run companies or raised capital have knowledge which is lacking in the Western Balkans. The Western Balkans could be an interesting spot because it is still an untapped market that's not saturated with 'startup hunters."

This sort of cross-border collaboration is not just beneficial to Berlin entrepreneurs and ecosystem supporters, though. Large, well-known German funds such as Point Nine and Earlybird are already looking to Southeast Europe, investing in companies from Serbia and Slovenia.

Smart investors would be thinking next of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina where costs are low, talent is ripe, and there are plenty of strong startups that need just the right push to blossom.

\* Berlin has the lowest cost of living of any Western European capital city.

# Conclusion

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The startup ecosystems of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina are at an exciting crossroads, full of promise and potential. While they may not yet rival Europe's largest hubs, they offer something equally valuable: room to experiment and innovate with fewer bureaucratic constraints.

As Ravik Mima, CEO of Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe, put it, "The Western Balkans should be used as a sandbox for Europe... There is more space and wiggle room to try things and see what works out here. Why not have these resilient people—who have grown in very peculiar circumstances—be given the opportunity?"

Indeed, this is a region shaped by resourceful, quick-thinking entrepreneurs, ready to bring fresh perspectives to innovation. For Berlin-based investors and founders, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina present an untapped frontier—one where collaboration, creativity, and ambition can thrive. Now is the time to explore these dynamic ecosystems and be part of shaping their future.

# Annex: Extended Stakeholder Directory – Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Ecosystem support organizations

Organization	Website	Description
BIT Alliance	<a href="http://bit-alliance.ba">bit-alliance.ba</a>	An association of leading Bosnian IT companies focused on workforce development and industry growth
BIT Centar	<a href="http://bitcentar.com">bitcentar.com</a>	An incubator and office space in Tuzla with modern equipment
Blum Institute	<a href="http://bluminstitut.ai">bluminstitut.ai</a>	Institute for artificial intelligence research and development
Burch Incubator	<a href="http://ibu.edu.ba/incubator">ibu.edu.ba/incubator</a>	A joint venture between SwissEP and International Burch University, working to foster youth entrepreneurship
Digital Innovation Hub - Digital Storm	<a href="http://digitalstorm.ba">digitalstorm.ba</a>	A collaboration between QSS and FabLab BiH that helps SMEs embrace digitalization to boost market competitiveness

Organization	Website	Description
<b>Elevate</b>	<a href="http://elevate.ba">elevate.ba</a>	A platform for startups, serving as a hub for information sharing, and showcasing success stories
<b>FabLab Sarajevo</b>	<a href="http://fablab.ba">fablab.ba</a>	A nonprofit Research and Technology organization advancing innovation in Bosnia through research, additive manufacturing, AI, and Industry 5.0 technologies
<b>Foundation 787</b>	<a href="http://f787.ba">f787.ba</a>	An organization based in Sarajevo that supports women and young people to start and grow their businesses
<b>Foundation Mozaik</b>	<a href="http://mozaik.ba">mozaik.ba</a>	A social business incubator whose mission is to develop enterprising young leaders
<b>Hexagon Startup Design</b>	<a href="http://hexagon-startupdesign.com">hexagon-startupdesign.com</a>	Company supporting startups with tailored strategies for growth, innovation, and global market entry
<b>HUB387</b>	<a href="http://hub387.com">hub387.com</a>	An IT park and coworking space in Sarajevo
<b>Impakt Investment Foundation</b>	<a href="http://impakt.ba/english">impakt.ba/english</a>	Empowering Bosnian entrepreneurs by fostering business growth, innovation, and community development

Organization	Website	Description
Innovation Centre Banja Luka (ICBL)	<a href="http://icbl.ba">icbl.ba</a>	A multifaceted incubator, containing education and training elements, conference facilities, and "business gardens"
INTERA Technology Park	<a href="http://intera.ba/en">intera.ba/en</a>	An NGO established in Mostar with the aim of encouraging economic development in the Herzegovina region
Networks	<a href="http://networks.ba">networks.ba</a>	A business center and coworking space in Sarajevo
SEEBA	<a href="http://seeba.se">seeba.se</a>	A consulting firm that supports small and medium-sized enterprises using an innovative approach that combines business and technical advisory
tershouse	<a href="http://tershouse.ba">tershouse.ba</a>	A business center and coworking space in Sarajevo
ZEDA	<a href="http://zeda.ba">zeda.ba</a>	An incubator and office space in Zenica with modern equipment

## Universities

University	Website	Description
International Burch University	<a href="http://www.ibu.edu.ba">www.ibu.edu.ba</a>	Runs the Burch Incubator, alongside SwissEP

University	Website	Description
<b>Sarajevo School of Science and Technology</b>	<a href="http://ssst.edu.ba">ssst.edu.ba</a>	Supports startups via their Innovation Lab, acceleration programs, and funding opportunities. Founded the Digital Innovation Hub, Its4Health
<b>University of East Sarajevo</b>	<a href="http://ues.rs.ba/en/ues">ues.rs.ba/en/ues</a>	University located in Sarajevo
<b>University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Electrical Engineering</b>	<a href="http://dsai.etf.unsa.ba">dsai.etf.unsa.ba</a>	Runs the new 'Data Science and Artificial Intelligence' program

## Investment & investors

Organization	Website	Description
<b>ICT Hub Ventures</b>	<a href="http://icthubventure.com/en">icthubventure.com/en</a>	A private investment fund in the SEE region that invests in startups in the pre-seed and seed phases
<b>Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe</b>	<a href="http://keiretsuforumsee.com">keiretsuforumsee.com</a>	The SEE chapter of a global investment community, looking to invest in seed, early stage, and growth stage startups
<b>South Central Ventures</b>	<a href="http://sc-ventures.com">sc-ventures.com</a>	A venture capital firm that invests in seed-stage companies in the SEE region

Organization	Website	Description
Vrbas Capital	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/vrbascapital">linkedin.com/company/vrbascapital</a>	Angel investment firm located in Banja Luka

## Government and development agencies

Institution	Website	Description
Federal Ministry of Development, Entrepreneurship, and Crafts (FMRPO)	<a href="https://fbihvlada.gov.ba/en/ministarstvo-razvoja-poduzetnistva-i-obrta">fbihvlada.gov.ba/en/ministarstvo-razvoja-poduzetnistva-i-obrta</a>	Supports economic growth and entrepreneurship for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GIZ Bosnia and Herzegovina	<a href="https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/289.html">www.giz.de/en/worldwide/289.html</a>	International cooperation for sustainable development and international education
Ministry of Economy and Entrepreneurship	<a href="https://vladars.rs/eng/vlada/ministries/mee/Pages/default.aspx">vladars.rs/eng/vlada/ministries/mee/Pages/default.aspx</a>	Supports economic growth and entrepreneurship for the Republic of Srpska
Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina	<a href="https://mvteo.gov.ba">mvteo.gov.ba</a>	In charge of state-level foreign trade policy and economic relations
United Nations Development Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNDP in BiH)	<a href="https://undp.org/bosnia-herzegovina">undp.org/bosnia-herzegovina</a>	Supports Bosnia and Herzegovina through programs such as the "Young Entrepreneurs Academy"

## Events and community

Event name	Website	Description
Business Angels Summit	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/fondacija787/">linkedin.com/company/fondacija787/</a>	A premier event in Bosnia and Herzegovina connecting Western Balkans investors, VCs, and startups
INNVEST Summit	<a href="https://innvestfund.com/innvest-summit">innvestfund.com/innvest-summit</a>	An annual event by INNVEST that brings together start-ups, investors, ISOs, and policymakers to raise awareness about equity investment
Kiss the Future AI Summit	<a href="https://kissthefuture.ai">kissthefuture.ai</a>	Three-day AI summit in Sarajevo, bringing together 1500 attendees
Sarajevo Business Forum	<a href="https://bbi.ba/sarajevobusinessforum">bbi.ba/sarajevobusinessforum</a>	A regional business and investment conference attended by 1500+ representatives from 50+ countries
Sarajevo Slush'd	<a href="https://sarajevoslushd.com">sarajevoslushd.com</a>	Entrepreneurship event in Sarajevo to showcase founders, investors, and startups
Sarajevo Unlimited	<a href="https://weareunlimited.ba/en">weareunlimited.ba/en</a>	A regional forum aiming to elevate success stories and connect entrepreneurs to investors and relevant institutions

# Annex: Extended Stakeholder Directory –

## Albania

### Ecosystem support organizations

Organization	Website	Description
Albanian Night	<a href="http://albaniannight.com">albaniannight.com</a>	Merging e-commerce, cultural heritage preservation and tourism into one immersive experience
Coolab House	<a href="https://instagram.com/coolab.tirana">instagram.com/coolab.tirana</a>	Co-working space in Tirana that partners actively with innovation support organizations
DESTIL Creative Hub	<a href="https://instagram.com/destilcreativehub">instagram.com/destilcreativehub</a>	A creative and cultural center in Tirana with coworking for startups and freelancers, an Academy for Women Entrepreneurs, a Smart Cities program, etc.
ICTSmedia	<a href="http://uplift.al">uplift.al</a>	Runs 'Uplift', an accelerator program that supports startups during the validation phase, as well as the ICT Awards
Oficina Hub	<a href="http://oficina-hub.al">oficina-hub.al</a>	Innovation and coworking hub, and laboratory in Tirana

Organization	Website	Description
Protik	<a href="http://protik.org">protik.org</a>	Fosters ICT innovation and entrepreneurship in Albania
Tirana Inc.	<a href="http://instagram.com/tiranainc">instagram.com/tiranainc</a>	Multi university incubator that supports student & research startups during the ideation phase
Women Founders Network Albania	<a href="http://instagram.com/womenfoundersalbania">instagram.com/womenfoundersalbania</a>	A community supporting women entrepreneurs in Albania and the Western Balkans
Yunus Social Business (YSB)	<a href="http://yunussb.com">yunussb.com</a>	An NGO that runs 'Growpreneur', an accelerator program that supports startups from the validation phase to the growth phase

## Universities

University	Website	Description
Epoka University	<a href="http://epoka.edu.al">epoka.edu.al</a>	Associated with Tirana Inc; an international university, located in Tirana
Metropolitan University of Tirana	<a href="http://umt.edu.al/en/metropolitan-incubator">umt.edu.al/en/metropolitan-incubator</a>	A founding member of Tirana Inc; based in Tirana, also runs the Metropolitan Incubator
Polis University	<a href="http://universitetipolis.edu.al">universitetipolis.edu.al</a>	A founding member of Tirana Inc; based in Tirana, also contains the Innovation Factory

University	Website	Description
University of Tirana	<a href="http://unitir.edu.al/en">unitir.edu.al/en</a>	The largest and most prominent public university in Albania. Also a founding member of Tirana, Inc., and supports students in developing entrepreneurial ideas.

## Investment & investors

Organization	Website	Description
Albanian Business Angels Network	<a href="http://alban.al">alban.al</a>	An Albanian angel investment network aiming to foster a thriving global ecosystem for entrepreneurs and investors
ICT Hub Ventures	<a href="http://icthubventure.com/en">icthubventure.com/en</a>	A private investment fund in the SEE region that invests in startups in the pre-seed and seed phases
Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe	<a href="http://keiretsuforumsee.com">keiretsuforumsee.com</a>	The newest chapter of Keiretsu Forum, a global investment community of accredited private equity angel investors, venture capitalists, and corporate/institutional investors
South Central Ventures	<a href="http://sc-ventures.com">sc-ventures.com</a>	A venture capital firm that invests in seed-stage companies in the SEE region

# Government and development agencies

Institution	Website	Description
Albanian Investment Corporation (AIC)	<a href="http://aicorporation.al/en">aicorporation.al/en</a>	AIC conceptualizes, prepares and executes bankable investment projects to draw in foreign investments
Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA)	<a href="http://aida.gov.al/en">aida.gov.al/en</a>	A public institution that functions as an intermediary between foreign investors and the Albanian government
EU4Innovation	<a href="http://euforinnovation.al">euforinnovation.al</a>	Supports the Albanian government to increase the maturity and exposure of the Albanian startup and innovation ecosystem
GIZ Albania	<a href="http://giz.de/en/worldwide/294.html">giz.de/en/worldwide/294.html</a>	International cooperation for sustainable development and international education
Startup Albania Agency	<a href="http://linkedin.com/company/startup-albania-agency/">linkedin.com/company/startup-albania-agency/</a>	National agency dedicated to fostering the growth of the startup ecosystem in Albania through financing, capacity building, and promotion

## Events and community

Event name	Website	Description
Albanian ICT Awards	<a href="https://instagram.com/ictawards">instagram.com/ictawards</a>	The ICT Awards celebrate innovation and excellence in information and communication technology
Digital Nomad Festival	<a href="https://digitalnomad.tirana.al">digitalnomad.tirana.al</a>	A 5-day event promoting topics such as entrepreneurship, creative tech, and green economy
Startup Grind	<a href="https://startupgrind.com/tirana">startupgrind.com/tirana</a>	The Tirana chapter of the leading global startup community

# Annex: Extended Stakeholder Directory – Berlin

## Ecosystem support organizations

Organization	Website	Description
Berlin Innovation Agency	<a href="http://berlin-innovation-agency.com/climatex-startup-accelerator">berlin-innovation-agency.com/climatex-startup-accelerator</a>	Pre-seed startup program for ambitious entrepreneurs working in specific fields
Berlin Partner for Business and Technology	<a href="http://berlin-partner.de/en">berlin-partner.de/en</a>	Berlin Partner works on economic growth, promotes business, technology and innovation, and broadcasts the advantages of Berlin
Betahaus	<a href="http://betahaus.com">betahaus.com</a>	Coworking space in Berlin for creatives and entrepreneurs
CIC Berlin	<a href="http://cic.com/berlin">cic.com/berlin</a>	Coworking space in Berlin for startups to enterprises
Digital Business Association Berlin-Brandenburg (SIBB)	<a href="http://sibb.de/en">sibb.de/en</a>	Connects digital businesses in Brandenburg and represents their interests in society, politics, and business

Organization	Website	Description
<b>The Drivery</b>	<a href="http://thedrivery.com">thedrivery.com</a>	Connects startups and corporate innovators through their Innovation Program
<b>Factory Network</b>	<a href="http://factory.network">factory.network</a>	Curated community and coworking space for founders, innovators and creatives looking for a like-minded ecosystem to thrive in
<b>IHK Berlin</b>	<a href="http://ihk.de/berlin/english/en">ihk.de/berlin/english/en</a>	The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Berlin
<b>Impact Hub</b>	<a href="http://berlin.impacthub.net">berlin.impacthub.net</a>	Coworking space for founders, startups, and other organizations working in impact
<b>Motion Lab</b>	<a href="http://motionlab.berlin">motionlab.berlin</a>	Germany's premier Innovation Hub & Makerspace
<b>Scale Compass</b>	<a href="http://startupcampusgermany.com">startupcampusgermany.com</a>	Munich-based business accelerator with a proven track record of success taking businesses to the DACH market
<b>Technology Park Adlershof</b>	<a href="http://adlershof.de/en">adlershof.de/en</a>	Germany's leading science and technology park
<b>Weiberwirtschaft</b>	<a href="http://weiberwirtschaft.de">weiberwirtschaft.de</a>	A women's cooperative that has established Europe's largest center for female founders and entrepreneurs

# Resources

**Berlin Tech Ecosystem Map**  
by Berlin Partner



**The Start-up and Innovation Ecosystem in Albania and Its Potential to Connect to Europe**  
by EU4Innovation

**Ecosystem overview of Albania**  
by AlbaniaTech



**The Western Balkans Startup Ecosystem Report Assessment and Development Roadmap**  
by GIZ

**Connect with us and learn more  
about how you can get involved!**



## Funding note

The Ecosystem Connectors project is funded by the Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH through the "Bund-Länder-Programm – German Government and Federal States Program (BLP)" in cooperation with the non-profit organization enpact.

The Ecosystem Connectors | Berlin Sarajevo Tirana project is being implemented in cooperation with the EU4Innovation project in Albania and the Sustainable Economic Development and Employment Promotion (SEDEP) project in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## About the partner projects

**EU4Innovation:** The European Union, Germany and Sweden work to create high paying jobs in Albania, by developing the innovation economy. The project leverages on Albania's human capital, entrepreneurial and research potential. The project is funded by the European Union with co-funding by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Sweden. The project is implemented by GIZ Albania and the Swedish Embassy in Albania.

**Visit website:** <https://euforinnovation.al/>

**SEDEP:** SEDEP is aiming to improve the employment situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through its support for the digital and green transformation of the economy. The project is co-financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Government of Switzerland and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. The project component "Strengthening of Vocational Education and Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (SVET) aims to strengthen the vocational education and training system to ensure the qualified labour force necessary for the country's sustainable economic development. The project component "Private Sector Development" (PSD) is primarily targeting the transformation of businesses towards a more digital and green economy ensuring a competitive and innovative economic ecosystem.

**Visit website:** <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/153222.html>

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